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Defending dirty power

I was dismayed to read Mike Peterson's dismissal of wind power's future for Utah ("Energy solutions for Utah will not be found 'blowing in the wind,'"Tribune, April 25), especially since his organization, the Utah Rural Electric Association, represents mostly dirty coal-fired electricity generation in Utah and clean wind power would be a direct threat.

To claim Utah doesn't have sufficient wind power flies in the face of the fact that, according to the American Wind Energy Association, Washington and Oregon rank comparably with Utah in terms of windiness, and one of the largest wind farms in the nation, the Stateline Wind Project, runs along their shared border. More than 300 megawatts serve 21,600 homes.

Peterson's criticism of the 1.8-cent-per-kilowatt-hour federal subsidy for wind power also rings hollow given that coal, nuclear and other sources of power have long enjoyed significant federal subsidies. Indeed, a few years ago, a Stanford University study noted that since 1973, the federal black-lung disease benefits program for coal miners has cost \$35 billion, which is just one direct subsidy for coal use in this country. If Peterson's mentality dominates Utah's electrical utilities, the state is doomed to fall further behind on the technological, economic and clean-air benefits of the nation's fastest growing energy source.

Kathryn Shelby
 Wellsville

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